

The leader of the group is Ilie Ilascu, president of the local branch of the democratic Moldavian Popular Front, which favors reunification with Romania. Such a move is strongly opposed by the Trans-Dnestr ruling authorities, who instead favor a closer alliance with Russia and independence for the Trans-Dnestr region.

Mr. Ilascu and three others remain in prison. One prisoner has been freed, and a sixth person, an infiltrator placed by the Trans-Dnestr secret police, was released after his testimony against the others.

There are reports that these men have been subjected to torture and mock executions. Ilie Ilascu remains in isolation in a top security prison.

Despite his imprisonment, in 1994 Mr. Ilascu was elected to the Parliament of Moldova. Although he has been duly elected, Ilie Ilascu has never been able to take his seat in parliament.

According to the State Department report, a group of Moldovan doctors was refused access to Mr. Ilascu in the fall. Trans-Dnestr authorities have also refused the International Committee of the Red Cross access for the purpose of monitoring the conditions of the prisoners.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we must press officials in Trans-Dnestr to allow access to these prisoners by the Red Cross.

I am pleased the State Department focused on this serious situation in its human rights report, and hope that it will continue to raise this issue with the governments of Russia and Moldova.

We should insist that Mr. Ilascu and the other prisoners be guaranteed their internationally-recognized human rights—the right to a fair trial, due process, and freedom of expression.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF MS. EUNICE GENTRY, MISS JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 10, 1998

Mr. THOMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ms. Eunice Gentry on obtaining the title of Miss Jackson State University 1997–98. Ms. Gentry is a native of Jackson, MS. She is a senior communications major and the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Roosevelt Gentry.

Ms. Gentry is very active in numerous organizations at Jackson State University (JSU). Such organizations include the Mass Communications Club, JSU Student Government Association, Tiger Pride Connection, and the JSU chapter of the NAACP. Among some of Ms. Gentry's accomplishments include her position as parliamentarian for the student chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists, a \$3,000 scholarship earned in a national essay competition sponsored by the National Black Programmers Coalition of Atlanta, and her membership to the W.E.B. DuBois Honors College. Over her summer break, Ms. Gentry worked as an intern for television station KVBC, the NBC affiliate in Las Vegas, NV.

Mr. Speaker, it is with the utmost pride that I stand here before you today and acknowl-

edge Ms. Eunice Gentry, Miss Jackson State University 1997–98.

IN HONOR OF THE NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY PUERTO RICAN/HISPANIC TASK FORCE

HON. CHARLES E. SCHUMER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 10, 1998

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the New York State Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force on the eve of their 11th Annual Conference.

This Task Force has brought together a large network of government officials, community leaders and service providers who share a common goal: improving the quality of life for our Hispanic population in New York. It has managed to draw on the strengths of its participants to move forward and knock down the continued barriers of bias and discrimination.

With great tenacity, the Task Force has fought for and won a number of battles on behalf of Hispanic constituencies. From identifying problems of access by Spanish speaking women to domestic abuse services to uncovering the tracking of Hispanic students in New York schools. Always, and with great success, they have found legislative solutions to these problems that have served to improve and protect the rights of all New Yorkers.

This year's annual legislative meeting will certainly bring to the fore some very important issues facing the Hispanic communities in New York. As our state legislature begins to work on issues such as the involvement of managed care, education reform and economic opportunity, the debate will no doubt be enhanced by the contributions to be made by this Task Force. In fact, all communities will be better served by having an inclusive rapport on these important topics.

I ask my fellow colleagues if I may take this opportunity to commend this fine organization for its leadership and resolve. May the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force continue its admirable task to ensure equal access, true representation and opportunity for all constituencies in New York.

HONORING DEIDRA C. TOWNS

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 10, 1998

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the skill and achievements of Deidra Towns. Her contribution to community and public service is incomparable.

A woman at the beginning of her career, Deidra's dynamic personality bespeaks a character that will stare the world down—and win. Already, she has flourished as an Administrative Assistant at Bedford-Stuyvesant Legal Services, a Managed Care Training Facilitator/Public Relations Coordinator at East New York Diagnostic and Treatment Center and as a Legislative Aid for the New York State Assembly. Currently, Deidra is the Team Leader for the Red Hook Public Safety Corps. In this po-

sition she has provided direction and structure to its AmeriCorps team. She has also planned and implemented projects designed to address public safety issues.

As a devoted mother to her daughter, Kiara, and a loving daughter to Edolphus and Gwen Towns, there is no doubt that this young woman will leave her special mark on her community.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Deidra C. Towns for all of her achievements, for being a woman who dares to be different, and for showing young women everywhere that they can do and accomplish anything.

COMMEMORATION OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY CANCER AWARENESS WEEK

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 10, 1998

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Childhood Cancer Awareness Week which will occur March 8th—March 14th in the County of Los Angeles. I would also like to acknowledge the American Cancer Fund For Children and its founder Steve Firestein for their tireless efforts to help children. Through their dedication and perseverance, they have influenced the lives of hundreds of children with cancer, while bringing awareness of this issue to our country as a whole.

Cancer is the leading cause of death by disease among children in our country. Each year, approximately 10,000 children are diagnosed with this frightening illness. A cure for cancer is an important goal that we all hope to achieve. Until that time, important services and programs like the American Cancer Fund for Children play a vital role in the lives of those afflicted with this disease.

The American Cancer Fund for Children has been established to provide financial assistance to families with children fighting cancer. When a child is sick, parents should not be restricted by financial burdens in determining what type of treatment their child receives. Funds are used for expenses such as a bone marrow transplant, housing and food. The American Cancer Fund for Children also enables parents to be with their children as they undergo treatment. This organization has also worked to meet hospital needs for patient and family services, helping to ensure the quality of care and improving the chances of survival. For instance, children participate in psycho-social services designed to foster self-esteem, encourage peer interaction and develop special patient communications.

Through his interactions with children entering the Los Angeles Orthopedic Hospital, Steven Firestein has provided them with courage and hope. He has established a national network of programs, through which he provides children with baseball caps, toys and sports cards. These small tokens do wonders to brighten a child's day.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, please join me in acknowledging the work of Steven Firestein and the American Cancer Fund for Children. They have worked to raise awareness of childhood cancer and they have motivated our community to take the first